



# Conflict and Communication Management

## State of Indiana Staff Training

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# Overview:

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## Conflict Management

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- Preparations
- Introductions

### I. Understanding Conflict

- A. Organizational Conflict
- B. Conflict Styles
  - 1. Activity: Conflict Styles Questionnaire
  - 2. Styles Discussion
- C. Understanding Your Personal Style
  - 1. Socialization
  - 2. Self-Awareness
  - 3. Awareness of Others
  - 4. Awareness of Place, or Context
- D. Understanding Type of Conflict
  - 1. Interests (Positions)
  - 2. Process
  - 3. Personality
- E. Recognizing Early Warning Signs or “Underground Conflict”

### II. Conflict as an Asset

### III. Handling Conflict

- A. Communication Skills
  - 1. Active Listening
  - 2. Non-Verbal Communication
  - 3. Fair Fighting Tactics
  - 4. Assertiveness
- B. Communication Killers
- C. Dealing with Difficult People

### IV. Wrap-up

- A. Questions and Answers (Discussion)
- B. Distribute EAP Business Cards

### V. Evaluations

## Organizational Conflict

### Drivers of Conflict in organizations today

1. Technology
2. Society/Markets
3. Mission of Organization
4. Structure, Processes, Roles
5. Expectations (customers, boards, management, employees, families)

### Basic expectations of organizational conflict

1. There shouldn't be any
  2. If there is, it means something is wrong
  3. If there is, someone isn't being right/fair/nice/appropriate
  4. Conflict will get you in trouble
- 
1. If there isn't any, something is really wrong
  2. If there isn't any, we aren't really dealing with the critical issues that we have to, to survive and thrive
  3. If everyone doesn't have good conflict management skills, it will hurt our ability to perform



### The Critical skills (of individual and groups) for successful conflict resolution in organizations are:

1. Diagnosis
2. Managing personal reactions/responses
3. Separating the personal and the business
4. Prioritizing, timing and forum/setting
5. Processing; feelings, thoughts, ideas
6. Processing to a solution

**Personal expectations are defined by what 'resolution' looks and feels like.**

**Resolution is evaluated by how the organization is functioning.**



## Conflict Styles (As I See Myself)

The following proverbs and statements reflect 'traditional wisdom' for resolving conflicts. Read each carefully. Using the scale given below, indicate how **typical** each proverb or statement is for **your** actions in a conflict.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 | Very typical of the way I act in a conflict     |
| 4 | Frequently typical of the way I act in conflict |
| 3 | Sometimes typical of the way I act in conflict  |
| 2 | Seldom typical of the way I act in conflict     |
| 1 | Never typical of the way I act in conflict      |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Soft words win hard hearts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Come now and let us reason together
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The arguments of the strongest always have the most weight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them in the first place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When one hits you with a stone, hit him with a piece of cotton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A question must be decided by knowledge and not by numbers if it is to have the right decision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. If you cannot make a person think as you do, he isn't worth knowing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. If someone is ready to quarrel with you, he isn't worth knowing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Smooth words make for smooth ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. He who fights and runs away, lives to run another day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. There is nothing so important that you have to fight for it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Kill your enemies with kindness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Seek till you find, and you'll not lose your labor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Might overcomes right.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Tit for tat is fair play.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Avoid quarrelsome people; they will only make your life miserable.

### SCORING

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|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 5. _____  | 3. _____  | 1. _____  | 4. _____  | 2. _____  |
| 10. _____ | 8. _____  | 6. _____  | 9. _____  | 7. _____  |
| 15. _____ | 13. _____ | 11. _____ | 14. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 20. _____ | 18. _____ | 16. _____ | 19. _____ | 17. _____ |

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## Conflict Styles

We all have different styles for handling conflicts. These styles are learned, usually as we were growing up as children. As adults, these reactions seem to “just happen” automatically. We are often not aware of how **we act** in conflict situations. We just do whatever seems to come naturally. We can, however, always learn new and more effective ways of handling conflict.

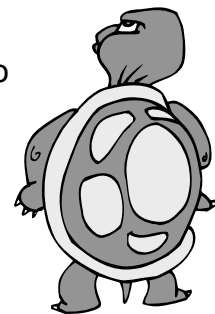
There are two major concerns in a conflict. The first concern is **achieving your personal goal(s)**. You are in conflict because you have a goal that conflicts with another person’s goal. Your goal may be highly important to you, or it may be of minor importance. The second concern is **keeping a good working relationship with the other person**. You need to be able to work effectively with that other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to you, or it may be of little importance. How important your personal goals and relationships are to you affects how you act in a conflict.

There are five styles of conflict management, based on these concerns. Given your scores on the **Conflict Styles questionnaire**, what is your style most likely to be?

### The Turtle

Turtles tend to withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They tend to give up their own personal goals and even relationships. They are likely to stay away from the people with whom they are in conflict.

Turtles may believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They may believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict, rather than face it. In the workplace, however, the Turtle style may be effective at times when it is necessary to lay low and wait out a storm.

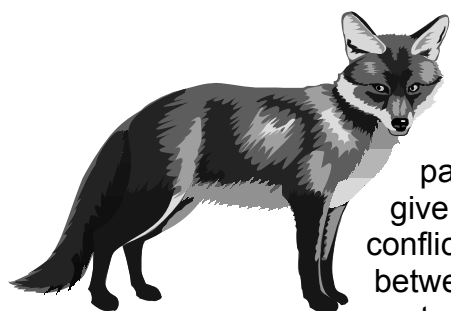
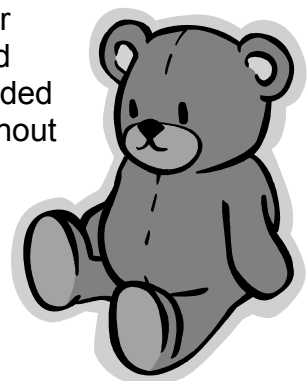


### The Shark

Sharks may try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals tend to be highly important to them; relationships tend to be of minor importance. They are likely to go after their goals at all costs. They may not be concerned with the needs of other people. They may not care if other people like or accept them. Sharks usually assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy and failure. They may try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, or intimidating other people. In the workplace, however, the Shark style may be effective for reaching goals in some tough situations.

## The Teddy Bear

To Teddy Bears, the relationship is of greatest importance...while their own goals take a back seat. Teddy Bears usually want to be accepted and liked by other people. They may think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and believe that conflicts cannot be discussed without damaging relationships. They tend to be concerned that if a conflict takes place, someone may get hurt, and the relationship may be ruined. They are likely to give up their goals to smooth over the conflict and preserve the relationship (which, unfortunately, they may resent later). However, in the workplace, the Teddy Bear style may be effective at times when damaged relationships need to be repaired, or handled gently with tender loving care.



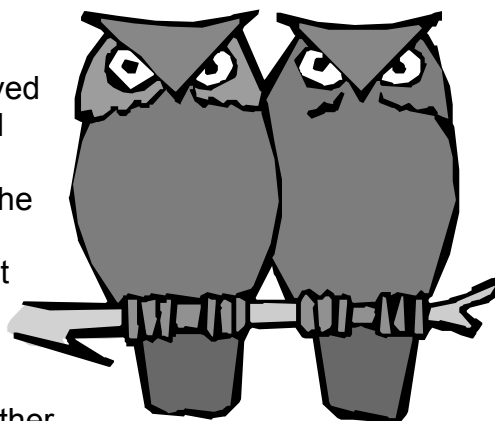
## The Fox

Foxes tend to be moderately concerned with their own goals and about their relationships with other people. Foxes are likely to seek some kind of compromise. They may give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of his/her goals. They tend to seek a solution to conflicts where both sides gain something; the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are usually willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for

the common good. This style is often effective in workplace situations which require negotiated compromises.

## The Owl

Owls tend to highly value both their own goals **and** their relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek solutions that achieve both their own goals and the goals of the other person. Owls tend to realize that conflicts can actually improve relationships by reducing the tensions between two people. They may try to begin a discussion that identifies **the conflict** as the problem, not the other person. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, Owls maintain their relationships. They tend to be dissatisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals **and** the other person's goals. The conflict is not over, in their minds, until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved. While this may be an optimal style in some workplace situations, time constraints and limited resources may make it unrealistic at other times.



## Conflict Styles (As Others See Me)

The following proverbs and statements reflect 'traditional wisdom' for resolving conflicts. You have been given this questionnaire from someone who wants to understand his or her conflict style from your eyes. Read each carefully. Using the scale given below, indicate how **typical** each proverb or statement is for this person when you have experienced him or her in conflict.

- |          |   |
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- |       |     |   |
|-------|-----|---|
| _____ | 1.  | Soft words win hard hearts.   |
| _____ | 2.  | Come now and let us reason together   |
| _____ | 3.  | The arguments of the strongest always have the most weight.                                     |
| _____ | 4.  | You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.  |
| _____ | 5.  | The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them in the first place.                         |
| _____ | 6.  | When one hits you with a stone, hit him with a piece of cotton.                                 |
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| _____ | 8.  | If you cannot make a person think as you do, he isn't worth knowing.                            |
| _____ | 9.  | Better half a loaf than no bread at all.  |
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### SCORING

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Total T =

Total S =

Total B =

Total F =

Total O =



## Underground Symptoms “Quiet Conflict”

Conflict in the workplace is frequently “underground”, or not directly addressed. **Watch for the following signs which may suggest there are some communication problems that need to be addressed:**

- Rumors flying and an unusually over-active grapevine;
- Unaccountable increases in mistakes (poor supervision, poor training);
- Confusion implementing decisions;
- An increase of apathy and withdrawal;
- A change in behavior patterns – aggressiveness or hostility (usually when receiver views something as a threat);
- Subordinates needing more hand-holding and contact;
- Subordinate making frequent demands on manager for reassurance (“Am I doing alright? Am I OK?”);
- An increase in the general anxiety lever (“Can feel the tension in the room”; “Can cut the air with a knife”);
- A need to repeat communication at a later time.



## Communication Skills

### Active Listening

Listening is the cornerstone to all communication.

**“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”**

*(Stephen Covey)*

**How well do you listen? Ask yourself the following questions;**

1. How well do you pay attention to what others are saying?
2. How able are you to suspend judgment of others' stories?
3. How well are you able to not react from your feelings of fear, anger, etc.?
4. How able are you to really hear what others are trying to say to you?
5. How able are you to “feed back” what you heard to others?





## Fair Fighting Tactics: The Ground Rules

<b>Specific Issue</b>	Define the problem and stay with one issue at a time.	
<b>Here and Now</b>	Stay with the present situation; don't bring up the past.	
<b>Listening</b>	Show the other person that you really hear their point of view before responding to your rebuttal. Practice: "What I heard you say was..."	
<b>Feelings</b>	Take ownership of your own feelings instead of blaming others (don't use phrases like "I felt upset when...")	
<b>Consequences</b>	Focus on the business consequences: how does this impact the success of the organization? (For example, "It is very difficult for me to be productive when...")	
<b>Clear Message</b>	It is helpful to frame your message: "When you did [Name a specific behavior], I felt [a feeling]. In the future, I'd like it if you could [request a specific behavior]."	
<b>Time Outs</b>	It's OK to take a "time-out" and remove yourself from the immediate situation and cool down. Be clear with the other person that this is what you are doing. The other person is not to follow or "hound" you; however, you are to state clearly you intend to return. Give a definite time/date/place and uphold your commitment!	
<b>Solutions</b>	As soon as you both know what the problem is, start to work on what you can do about it (as opposed to churning over and over and over with your complaint.)	

## Communication Killers

<b>Interrupting</b>	You interrupt your subordinate because what you have to say is more important ...besides, you are the boss.
<b>Mind Reading</b>	You just know what your co-worker is thinking ...just look at the way he's acting!
<b>Monopolizing</b>	You barely pause for a breath, and enchant the audience with your fascinating thoughts. If you paused, someone may interrupt.
<b>Dishonesty</b>	Your mask is trying to relate to others' masks. Let's all pretend.
<b>Being an Authorization</b>	You have no use for others' input; you have to be demanding and bossy, or nothing will get done!
<b>Playing Know-It-All</b>	There is nothing you can learn from others. In fact, you always have a story that tops all others.
<b>Needing To Be Right</b>	You justify yourself at all costs; if you don't defend yourself, you'll be eaten alive by other corporate climbers.
<b>Withholding</b>	You don't share your observations, opinions, or feelings. If the boss really cared, she would ask directly!
<b>Rehearsing</b>	You practice what you're about to say in your mind while others are babbling...you've got something brilliant to say to this committee.
<b>Filtering</b>	You selectively ignore what your boss says. The urgent deadlines were the really important things, anyway.
<b>Judging</b>	You selectively ignore what your co-worker has to say. She's clueless about this project, and her opinions are baseless.
<b>Dreaming</b>	You can just smell that fresh sea air and the feel the sunshine on your face ... how many days before vacation, anyway?
<b>Advising</b>	You know exactly what your teammates need to do, how they should do it and why. They are lucky to have you on board.
<b>Wimping Out</b>	You sheepishly back down and agree with the clerk in the other department. It's never that important, anyway.
<b>Psycho-Analyzing</b>	You know your co-worker is persistently late with your assignments because he secretly resents your resemblance to his mother.

## Dealing with Difficult People

### The Know-It-All

- Do your homework! In order for them to listen, you must be knowledgeable and credible. If there are flaws, the Know-It-All will find them
- Listen and acknowledge their comments
- Present your ideas in the least threatening way: Ask questions to project the idea into the future. “So what happens if...” When it is hypothetical, it is less of a direct challenge to their authority, so less likely to trigger their defensiveness.

### The THINK They Know-It-All

- Don't inhale the hot air
- State the facts
- Allow them an escape from their own misinformation.



### The Wet Blanket

- Don't get dragged in
- Somehow remember optimism
- Don't concede
- Restrain your urge to move ahead—take time to specify the issues
- Use them to point out the warnings and pitfalls
- Be prepared to go it alone...others may catch the flame of your enthusiasm.

### The YES Person

- Slow down, reassure and acknowledge
- Make it safe by reassuring them that the relationship is important to you
- Take the situation into the future: “What do you think will happen if...” (reassure them if they share any fears)
- Surface the problem for problem-solving; find out what they are afraid to say
- Work together to problem-solve the issues they raise
- Final goal is to insure commitment



### The MAYBE PERSON

- Slow it down
- Invite honesty, make it safe
- Ask them for their considerations – continue to reassure
- Help examine the facts
- Prioritize alternatives
- Give support for their decision
- If possible, keep action steps in your hands
- Get their commitment

## The GRENADE

- Look for positive intent behind the explosion
- Give them credit
- Get their attention with concern
- Take time to chill
- Identify what triggered the explosion. If it's you, choose some new behavior
- Keep trying to recognize their positive intent.



## The SNIPER

- Don't ignore them
- Address their tone and identify the real concern; bring the grievance to the surface
- Offer a peaceful alternative to open conflict
- Find out if the group agrees or disagrees
- Get specific about any legitimate problem; don't go for the quick fix offered by the sniper; it's better to define the problem
- Get all the info—then problem-solve



## The TANK

- Stand your ground
- Go for completion
- State your case

## The COMPLAINER

- Listen carefully. Let them ventilate and relax
- Backtrack their main points—interrupt if necessary
- Zero in on specifics: Who, What, When, How...
- Have them gather information and bring it back
- Let them resolve the problem: Either they do the work or they leave you alone
- Remember: Whose problem is it? So who can solve it?

## The NOTHING PERSON

- Set a time limit and let them know
- During that time, be expectant—any minute they will speak!
- Ask open ended questions, like How and What. Avoid Yes/No questions
- Wait silently, with expectant look. Don't fill the gap with your words. One of two things will occur: they will answer or they will stay silent
- Comment on the process; make a meta-comment: "This seems to be what is going on..."

## Evaluation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

*No name is required! This is strictly to help us improve these presentations...we want your honest feedback.*

### Content (what it was about):

- ☐ I've heard this all before, and learned nothing new
- ☐ This was a good reminder of things I've already known.
- ☐ This was interesting, I learned new things.
- ☐ This applies to my personal life; I'm going to try it out at home, too.

### Applicability (how well it fit this organization/situation):

- ☐ This presentation completely missed the mark.
- ☐ This presentation could be applied to some of the experiences here.
- ☐ This presentation really fits what's going on.

### Delivery (how it was presented):

- ☐ I felt talked down to
- ☐ I felt like the speaker tried to razzle-dazzle us with too many fancy words
- ☐ I could really relate to what the speaker was saying

### Speaker's skill and style:

Loud enough .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Clear .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Had a good pace (not too fast or too slow).....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Had a sense of humor .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Related well with the audience.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Knew what he/she was talking about .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Could improve by: _____			

### Handouts:

- ☐ None handed out.
- ☐ I will be keeping mine for future use.
- ☐ I will be giving a copy to someone else who needs to see this.
- ☐ Sorry, mine will be trashed.

### Why I attended:

- ☐ It was suggested/required that I attend. It sounded interesting.
- ☐ I just happened to be in the room during this presentation

**Future interest:**

I would be interested in the following workshops/seminars:

- ☐ Time Management
- ☐ Stress Management
- ☐ Conflict Management
- ☐ When Does “Being Down” or “The Blues” Become Depression?
- ☐ Surviving Adolescence – A Primer for Parents
- ☐ Communication Skill Building
- ☐ Survivors – Adult Children of Alcoholics
- ☐ Coping with Difficult People
- ☐ Coping with Change
- ☐ Recognizing & Constructively Confronting the Alcohol or Drug Abusing Employee
- ☐ Coping with Holiday Stress
- ☐ Balancing Work and Personal Life
- ☐ Alcohol and Drug Awareness
- ☐ Working Parents
- ☐ When Those We Love Attempt Suicide
- ☐ How Drinking Affects Families
- ☐ Passages Through Mid-Life
- ☐ Adjusting to a Critical/Traumatic Incident
- ☐ Planning for Retirement Before Retirement
- ☐ Supervisory Skills
- ☐ Coaching Skills
- ☐ Assertiveness Skills
- ☐ Valuing Diversity in the Workplace
- ☐ Customer Service with Difficult Customers
- ☐ Team Building
- ☐ Violence in the Workplace
- ☐ Sexual Harassment – Prevention and Compliance
- ☐ ADA Compliance with Mental Health and Drug Dependency Issues in the Workplace
- ☐ Career Transitioning: Coping with Layoffs
- ☐ Career Transitioning: Revamping Your Resume
- ☐ Career Transitioning: How to Find a New Job
- ☐ Surviving Corporate Mergers and Acquisitions
- ☐ Transitioning from Worker to Supervisor

Other:

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